

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6446
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

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SUBJECT: NEW SOVIET PROCEDURE FOR UNACCOMPANIED DIPLOMATIC MAIL

FRANKFURT FOR FRDCO

REF: A) MOSCOW 10391 JULY 74 (NOTAL)

B) STATE 142421 JULY 74 (NOTAL)

C) MOSCOW 13196 OCT 73 (NOTAL)

D) STATE 208102 OCT 73 (NOTAL)

E) MOSCOW 0935

1. BY MFA CIRCULAR NOTE (TEXT BEING SENT SEPTEL) TO ALL MOSCOW EMBASSIES, SOVIET AUTHORITIES INTRODUCED NEW PROCEDURE FOR AIR-SHIPPED DIPLOMATIC MAIL UNACCOMPANIED BY COURIERS. ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF ARRANGEMENT IS THAT ALL UNACCOMPANIED DIPLOMATIC MAIL BE SENT AND RECEIVED THROUGH NEW HANDLING OFFICE AT SHEREMETYEOV AIRPORT. PROCEDURES FOR POUCHES ACCOMPANIED BY COURIERS ARE NOT CHANGED.

2. AS DESCRIBED (REF A), EMBASSY HAS WITH INFORMAL PERMISSION AIRPORT AND CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES HERETOFORE LOADED AND RECEIVED MAJORITY UNACCOMPANIED POUCHES AT PLANESIDE. NEW SOVIET ORDER BEING VIGOROUSLY ENFORCED SO THAT SUCH INFORMAL ARRANGEMENTS NO LONGER POSSIBLE.

3. THEREFORE, ON JANUARY 21, EMBASSY OFFICER CALLED ON COUNSELOR PROTOCOL DEPARTMENT MIKHAIL FILATOV TO SEEK RESTORATION STATUS
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QUO ANTE. EMBASSY OFFICER EXPLAINED NEWLY IMPOSED SYSTEM IMPEDED

FLOW OF DIPLOMATIC MAIL AND INSOFAR AS IMPEDED DELIVERY
TO AND FROM PAN AM FLIGHTS WOULD BE IN VIOLATION SOVIET-US
1968/69 AGREEMENTS.

4. FILATOV RESPONDED THAT CIRCULAR NOTE NO. 9/PR OF
JANUARY 9, 1975, APPLIED TO ALL EMBASSIES AND SOVIET GOVERNMENT
PLANNED TO MAKE NO EXCEPTIONS. EMBASSY OFFICER SAID THERE
WOULD THEN BE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO REPORT THE CHANGED PROCEDURES
TO THE DEPARTMENT, WHERE THE MATTER, WHICH EMBASSY REGARDS AS
SERIOUS, MIGHT BE RAISED AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL.

5. FILATOV THEN SAID HE WOULD TRANSMIT REQUEST TO CHIEF OF
PROTOCOL FOR EXCEPTIONAL TREATMENT OF UNACCOMPANIED POUCHES
ON THE PAN AMERICAN FLIGHT. EMBASSY OFFICER SAID HE HOPED AND
ASSUMED FAVORABLE ACTIONWOULD BE TAKEN ON THIS REQUEST
SINCE THIS IN KEEPING WITH EXISTING BILATERAL AGREEMENT.
EMBASSY OFFICER STATED, HOWEVER, THAT THIS ALONE WOULD NOT
MEET EMBASSY'S NEEDS FOR UNACCOMPANIED POUCH SERVICES.
ALSO, POINTED OUT THAT WEEKLY 40 HOUR SCHEDULE FOR DELIVERY
AND RECEIPT UNACCOMPANIED DIPLOMATIC POUCHES WAS TOTALLY
INADEQUATE AND REPRESENTED MARKED DETERIORATION FROM EARLIER
PRACTICE WHERE EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES ABLE OBTAIN SUCH
POUCHES DIRECTLY FROM PLANE PROMPTLY AFTER RECEIPT.

6. FILATOV SAID NEW PROCEDURES NOT INTENDED TO HINDER
BUT FACILITATE FLOW OF DIPLOMATIC POUCHES AND THEREFORE AGREED
TO TRANSMIT TO CHIEF OF PROTOCOL EMBASSY REQUEST THAT EMBASSY
REPRESENTATIVES BE PERMITTED PICK UP AND DELIVER
UNACCOMPANIED POUCHES FOR FLIGHTS OF THIRD COUNTRY AIRLINES
AS WELL AS PAN AM. HE WOULD NOT GIVE ANY INDICATION WHEN AND
ANSWER WOULD BE FORTHCOMING, BUT AGREED TO TRANSMIT REQUEST
PROMPTLY.

7. WHILE SOVIETS CAN PRESUMABLY BE EXPECTED HONOR 1968/69
AGREEMENT AND PERMIT PLANESIDE PICKUP OF UNACCOMPANIED POUCHES
SENT VIA PAN AM, IF MFA INITIALLY REFUSES REQUEST TO ACCORD
SIMILAR PRIVILEGES TO THIRD COUNTRY AIRLINES, EMBASSY BELIEVES
THAT UNACCOMPANIED POUCHES NOT SENT VIA PAN AM SHOULD BE
ROUTED IN AND OUT OF SOVIET UNION VIA COURIER UNLESS
OR UNTIL COUNTERVAILING PRESSURES CAN BE APPLIED ON SIMILAR
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PRIVILEGES ACCORDED SOVIET EMBASSY WASHINGTON OR SMUN.
STOESSEL

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